

Attending The North Jersey Pride Festival



A Social Narrative for
Adults & Adolescents

By
**Together
We Bloom**

CONNECTION  COMMUNICATION  COMMUNITY

About Social Stories

Social Stories are first-person narratives written to introduce a new, unexpected, or challenging situation with simple language and pictures. They help the reader know what to expect and provide options for support.

Anyone can benefit from learning about situations ahead of time but social stories are often particularly helpful for neurodivergent individuals, including Autistic people or people with anxiety.

Social stories should be used as a tool to empower and support inclusion and access, not to force compliance with social norms.

This Social Story was created by Together We Bloom as part of a partnership with Pride to prioritize and strengthen disability inclusion and accessibility at this year's event. SOMA's diversity is its strength, and this includes neurodiversity and disability. To view accessibility and disability inclusion supports, visit:
<https://www.northjerseypride.org/accessibility>

Together We Bloom is a local 501(c)3 nonprofit with a mission to empower young children with disabilities and their families through equitable access to connection, communication, and community. We advance this mission through two vital strategies: sliding-scale, neurodiversity-affirming speech and language therapy and disability justice, equity, and belonging initiatives to make our community a more inclusive place.

To learn more or support our work for inclusivity please visit:
www.TogetherWeBloom.org

I am going to an event in my community called the Pride Festival. Pride is a outdoor festival with music, performers, food, and community celebrations in Maplewood, NJ.

The event is held on Saturday, July 13 and Sunday, July 14 from 12:00pm-10:00pm.

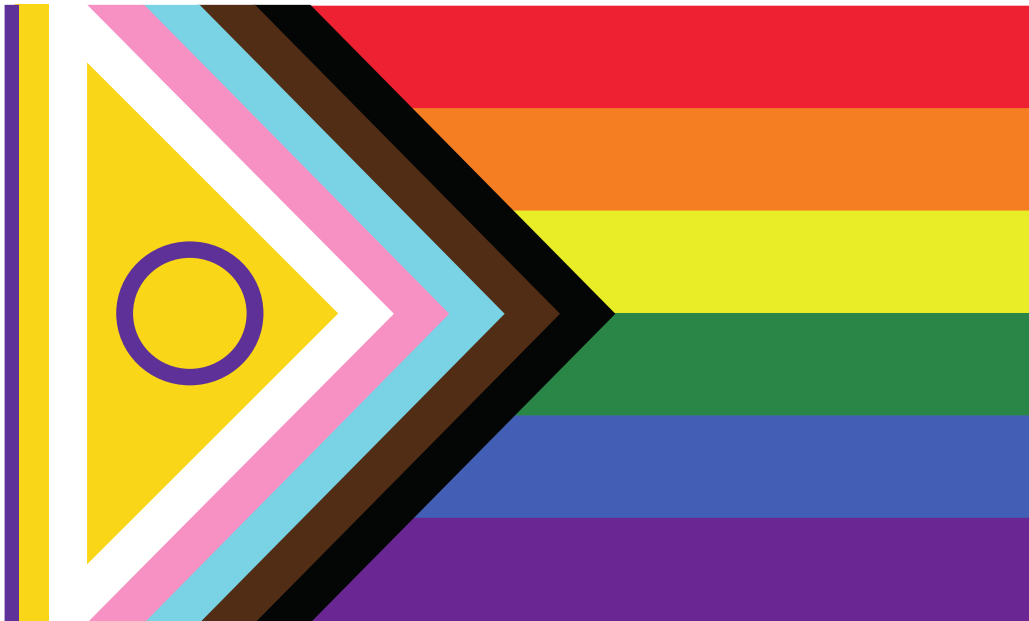
Pride is completely free to attend and no registration or ticket is needed. Food and apparel are available for purchase.

Parking is available on side streets near the park. Parking may be limited so I may have to park a distance away and walk over. There are accessible parking options near the performance space.



Pride is a celebration of the LGBTQ+ community. This stands for Lesbian-Gay-Bi-Trans-Queer. The rainbow flag is the symbol of Pride.

The Pride festival celebrates and supports equity, family, and community.



At THE PRIDE Festival, there is a big stage set up in Maplewood's memorial park. During the festival, musicians, singers, and bands take turns performing on the stage while people come to enjoy the music and spend time outside at the park.

See the map at the end of the book to find the location of the stage.





I will hear lots of different types of music and performances at Pride.



There is an American-Sign Language interpreter on stage for the entire festival. They will be standing on the right of the stage when you're looking at it. There is a Deaf Access Area right in front of the interpreter.

See the map at the end of the book to find the location.



There are lots of people who come to celebrate Pride and watch the performers at the Pride Festival. There are often big crowds.



Lots of people wear rainbow colors or clothing with LGBTQ or Trans flags to show their pride or support. I can wear whatever clothing is right for me to be comfortable or to express myself.

At the festival, I am free to choose what I do. Some people walk around the park. Some sing and dance to the music. Some people eat food or have a picnic. Some people sit in lawn chairs or on picnic blankets that they bring from home.



There is some food and drinks for sale at the festival in tents and food trucks at the top of the hill in front of the stage. I can bring my own drinks and snacks from home too.

See the map at the end of the book to find the location.



There are also tents where local organizations that are supportive of LGBTQ+ people have information and sometimes items for sale or giveaways.



In the Rainbow Kids' Zone, there are bouncy houses, games, kids shows, and face painting. Tickets for inflatables are just \$10 per child for all-day fun with a max of \$20 per family. The ticket comes as a bracelet to wear.

There is an interactive Kids' Stage featuring a new and exciting show every hour on the hour (12:00, 1:00, 2:00, 3:00, 4:00, 5:00)

See the map at the end of the book to find the location.



RAINBOW KIDS ZONE



At the festival, there is a Neuroqueer Pride Celebration Area to celebrate people who are both neurodivergent and queer. Many neurodivergent people also identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community so this area is made to accommodate and celebrate them.

This area is away from the stage and crowded areas, so that it is a less overwhelming experience.

In this area there is a "quiet tent" for people looking for a quieter, reduced activity area to hang out together. There are coloring pages and crayons.

There is also a "Party Tent" for people who like to move around, make noise, and be louder. There are some games and bubbles. There are swings nearby as well.

All Neuroqueer folks and any people who support them are welcome. Kids and adults are welcome.

See the map at the end of the book to find the location.



Everyone's experience of the Pride Festival is different. If watching the festival feels too loud or overwhelming, I can take a break.

If it is too loud or crowded in front of the stage, I can hang out in the Sensory-Friendly "Quiet tent" in the Neuroqueer Pride Celebration Area. There is a tent for shade and picnic blankets to relax on the grass. There are ear defenders to borrow.

See the map at the end of the book to find the location.



If I need an even quieter, calming space, I can take a break at the sensory activation van which is next to the Neuroqueer Pride area. In the van, it is much quieter. There are soft lights, some sensory toys and books.

See the map at the end of the book to find the location.



If I need to move or run around, I can use the field near the Neuroqueer Pride area or the nearby playground or basketball courts.



I can stay at hang out with the people I came with, or I can meet new people at the festival. I can talk to whomever I feel comfortable talking to.

I can stay at the Pride Festival for as long as I want and go home when I feel ready.



I am an important part of my community.

**Music and Community are for everyone!
Pride is for everyone!**



NORTH JERSEY PRIDE FESTIVAL MAP



**Special thanks to North Jersey Pride for their partnership
and for making this event more accessible.**

**Photo Credits: Photos from NJ Pride's website
<https://www.northjerseypride.org/> and Facebook Page**

**For the online version of this social narrative use your phone's
camera to scan the QR code below:**



**For additional disability inclusion supports and accessibility
information, visit:**

<https://www.northjerseypride.org/accessibility>

